

USFJ sets new alcohol limits for on-base driving

New changes to a U.S. Forces, Japan, regulation will impact how much alcohol drivers on U.S. installations can have in their bloodstreams and still be considered fit to drive.

The new policy, which goes into effect April 4th, establishes a .03 Blood Alcohol Content standard for all drivers on U.S. installations. This is the same limit set by Japanese law and means that the same standards will apply regardless of whether you're driving on or off base. Operating a motor vehicle with a BAC level of .03 and above constitutes Driving Under the Influence under Japanese law.

"This change means the same standards will apply to drivers on or off base," said Chief Master Sgt. Terrence Greene, USFJ and 5th Air Force command chief. "You can face a suspended license or UCMJ charges, so regardless of where you're driving in Japan, have a designated driver or a plan to get home safe. And, remember, do the right thing—don't drink and drive."

The change is simple, according to USFJ leaders. There is now a minimum disciplinary action of a 60-day license suspension for those caught driving with a BAC level .03 to .079. In addition, commanders have the right to impose additional disciplinary measures, depending on the circumstances. Those caught driving with a BAC level at or above .08 are considered intoxicated drivers and will be dealt with accordingly under the UCMJ.

Prior to the update, installations throughout Japan had varying policy enforcing BAC minimums. The change is aimed at standardizing policy across all U.S. installations in Japan and is focused on removing any possible confusion between prior policies. It is also meant to ensure service members are well informed of the expectations of driving on and off installations throughout Japan.

According to USFJ representatives, the recent policy change has been under review for several months and is not related to any recent events.